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Information Directorate technology to aid shuttle probe

by Fran Crumb, Information Directorate

ROME, N.Y. — The Air Force Space Command's Space Analysis Division team probing the Feb. 1 breakup of the Space Shuttle Columbia will utilize timeline analysis technology developed by the Air Force Research Laboratory's Information Directorate.

"Our Web-based Timeline Analysis System (WebTAS) has been installed at the Space Analysis Division's Colorado Springs facility," said John Mucks, program manager in the directorate's Information and Intelligence Exploitation Division.

The technology combines data from various sources to create a visual timeline of events. It was made available to the Space Analysis Center after Maj. Gen. Paul D. Nielsen, AFRL Commander and a former commander in Rome, offered WebTAS to members of the Air Force investigative board assisting NASA in the Columbia investigation.

WebTAS is being used by the Department of Defense (DoD) Columbia Investigation Support Team to correlate, validate and visualize multiple databases of DoD sensors and related information. A wide variety of data from different orbital analysis tools is being correlated with DoD sensor data by WebTAS to visualize the dynamic nature of Orbiter events across the mission timeline.

WebTAS provides a capability to rapidly connect to diverse data sources and combine the data in multiple analytical/visualization tools, with the goal of providing alerts/warnings of developing situations. Space Analysis Division officials have indicated the Columbia project may be the first of several useful applications for WebTAS within the center.

Currently, WebTAS supports operational users in the tracking of events, individuals, and/or organizations in support of counter insurgency, counter drug, counter terrorism and law enforcement. @